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Presented 1827

The Influence of the Crusades upon the Arts and Literature of Europe:

A PRIZE ESSAY

READ IN

THE SHELDONIAN THEATRE, OXFORD,

JUNE 27, 1827.

" To these wild expeditions, the effect of superstition and folly, " we owe the first gleams of light which tended to dispel barba- " rism and ignorance." *Robertson, Charles V.*



Oxford
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ARGUMENT.

Introduction. Difference of opinion upon the present question, to be reconciled by a distinction between the direct, and the indirect influence of the Crusades upon the Arts and Literature of Europe.

1. The direct influence of the Crusades shewn to have been subordinate to that of other circumstances, and comparatively unimportant. Causes assigned for the positive and negative character of this influence.

2. The indirect influence of the Crusades shewn to have been beneficial to the Arts and Literature of Europe. §. 1. By the excitation and concentration of feeling. §. 2. By the removal of obstacles connected with the feudal system. §. 3. By the eventual substitution of commercial for military habits. This change, in its progress, favourable to useful arts; in its effects, to elegant arts and literature.

Objections to this view of the subject, examined. Conclusion, adverting to the comparative refinement of Europe and the East at this time, as contrasted with that of each in the age of the Crusades.

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The Influence of the Crusades upon the Arts and Literature of Europe.

THE intellectual character of nations has often derived advantage from times of political convulsion or military excitement. The powers, which have been stimulated by one motive, are easily sustained by another; and the first impulse, therefore, as it is not generally the best, should be such as effectually to awaken, but not permanently to engross, the mind. The enthusiasm of war, and the agitations of party spirit, are precisely of this animating, but transient nature; while the attractions of knowledge, more durable, though less dazzling, than the triumphs of military, or political preeminence, are those most likely to give the ultimate direction to feelings and energies, which they were not originally strong enough to inspire. In Greece, the habits of mental exertion, which led to intellectual, no less than to political, dominion, were formed by the emergencies of a foreign invasion; the genius of the Augustan age was matured in the civil wars which preceded it; and the restoration of Arts and Literature to Europe was accelerated by an event, which, in the keenness and universality of the interest promoted by it, has no parallel in the history of former times. The attempt of the Christians in Western Europe to recover the Holy Land was the first great subject, after the fall of the Roman empire,

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which inflamed the passions, and transformed the characters of men, too powerfully to admit of a relapse into apathy and its attendant ignorance.

In assuming that the influence of the Crusades upon the Arts and Literature of Europe was at once extensive and beneficial, reference has been made to remote and accidental, rather than to immediate, consequences. Effects, the slowest in progress, are often the surest in operation; especially when differing wholly in character from the cause with which they are connected. The Crusades, from their nature, could only have occasioned a revolution in the intellectual state of Europe by introducing a preparatory change of feelings and habits. Their influence, therefore, upon Arts and Literature, so far as it was complete and universal, must necessarily have been mediate and progressive.

With this distinction in view, it will not be difficult to reconcile, in some measure, the apparently opposite conclusions, at which writers on the present subject have arrived. Errors of opinion have here, as elsewhere, been mutually repelled into extremes. The influence of the Crusades has been greatly exaggerated by some, and altogether denied by others. The generality have been more prone to remark the political and social, than the intellectual results of the Crusades. But in asserting the existence of the one, they have implied that of the other. No great change in the condition of man, as a member of so-

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ciety or of a political community, has ever taken place without a corresponding effect upon the character of his intellectual operations.

Here, then, in a mean between two extremes of opinion, the truth will probably be found. Europe was neither wholly active, nor wholly passive, in the change from barbarism to refinement. She acted at once spontaneously, and under the effect of impressions produced by external circumstances. Among these, however, it is impossible not to assign the foremost rank to that remarkable project, which has conferred a name, as it stamped a character, upon its age. But the intimations of history confirm the suggestions of antecedent probability in warranting the assertion, that the Crusades were not so much a cause of actual knowledge, introduced by their direct influence into Europe, as of those awakened feelings and altered habits, by which the useful arts in the first instance, and eventually the elegant arts and literature, were indisputably promoted. "The "natural genius and intellectual habits of men," it has been of old remarked, "are more easily re- "pressed than recalled[a];" and it was no single event, however interesting, nor age, however fertile of impressions, that could effectually have restored the mental powers of Europe after five centuries of ignorance and prejudice. Accordingly we find between the Crusades and the restoration of learning an in-

[a] Ingenia studiaque hominum oppresseris facilius quam revocaveris. *Tac.*

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terval of two centuries; and that too, a period so generally devoid of intellectual cultivation, as to forbid the supposition of any direct influence upon knowledge; and so prolific of concurrent causes, as to withhold from the Crusades all exclusive claim to the merit of restoring arts and literature. To fix then the permanent advantages of the Crusades upon their remote, indirect, and accidental influence, as well as to ascertain the nature and extent of their immediate effects, will be the object of the present discussion.

The immediate benefits of the Crusades we naturally look for in the arts and literature of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. But this period we find to differ in no important point from the preceding. Original literature is still, throughout the whole of this long interval, confined principally to works of imagination, and knowledge of classical antiquity to a minute, but trivial, acquaintance with the Aristotelian philosophy; medicine, geometry, and arithmetic [b] are in these, as in former centuries, the studies pursued in the schools of Cordova and Salerno; to the general absence of useful arts some exceptions begin at length to appear in the manufacture of silk, and the construction of windmills [c]; while, of elegant arts, Architecture alone continues to be cultivated with success.

[b] Mosheim, Eccl. Hist. cent. IX. X. and XI.

[c] Gibbon, vol. xi. c. 61. note.

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To what, then, we proceed to inquire, are we to ascribe this elementary and superficial knowledge? Not certainly in any great degree to the Crusades; for it is found to have existed in the preceding century. To the reign of Charlemagne, probably, and the dispersion of the Normans, we are to look for some of the earliest causes of reviving intellect. But for the traces of Oriental knowledge, (with which we are now more immediately concerned,) we must refer to the Saracenic conquests in Spain, and the intercourse subsequently maintained by the travels of Gerbert more especially, between that country and the rest of Europe. Nor must we omit, as a powerful cause of the same taste for Oriental literature, the visits, devotional or commercial, of individuals to Palestine. This knowledge continued from the ninth to the fifteenth century to flow into Europe; and it is often difficult or impossible to ascertain exactly the proportion due to each separate cause of connexion with the East. The light of learning and civilization was so gradually and imperceptibly diffused, that we often fail in attempting to separate its collected rays, and to assign a determinate colour and force to each.

But the Arts and Literature of Europe, in the age of the Crusades and that which immediately followed, although in kind scarcely distinguishable from those in the preceding century, were widely different in degree. Poetry and fiction were already more interesting in materials, and more

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systematic in form; the Aristotelian philosophy lent its aid more generally to the spirit of scholastic disputation; and considerable accessions had been made to the mathematical, arithmetical, and medicinal knowledge of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

In Architecture, changes had been introduced from the East which to some have appeared fundamental. But the progress which, from specimens in our own country, we know that this art had previously made, forbids [d] us to regard the improvements derived from Palestine as sufficiently novel in character to justify an exception to a rule elsewhere so generally applicable.

Thus then we gather, that the effects produced immediately by the Crusades upon the Arts and Literature of Europe were chiefly of a subordinate and supplemental character. They tended to strengthen and extend preexisting impressions; to confirm, rather than to originate knowledge. For any considerable diffusion of arts and literature, unknown before the Crusades, we look in vain till the fifteenth century. The enlargement of geographical knowledge, upon which some have insisted, seems too little a consequence of the Crusades, as distinguished from any other distant expedition, to demand attention; and, in fact, as the means of future acquisi-

[d] Quart. Review, Aug. 1809.

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tions in arts and literature, rather than the exemplification of a direct intellectual influence, may be referred, like the corresponding effect of the Crusades upon Commerce, to the second division of our subject.—Nor does it seem necessary, in a comprehensive view of the question like the present, to dwell upon certain comparatively unimportant arts [e], brought to perfection soon after the Crusades, which have been by some thought sufficient to give a primary character to the influence of those expeditions. We must here and elsewhere distinguish as well between effects and mere coincidences, as between knowledge directly introduced from the East by the Crusades, and that which was attendant upon a reviving spirit of industry in Europe, whether due to the Crusades or to other causes.

Two inquiries here naturally suggest themselves: why and in what manner were the Crusades productive of any immediate influence upon the Arts and Literature of Europe? and why were they not productive of more?

That the Crusades should have exercised some direct influence upon the Arts and Literature of Eu-

[e] The use of the sugar cane, and the knowledge and application of particular drugs. Likewise the manufacture of silk; but there is no certainty, nor sometimes even probability, that any of these improvements were introduced by the Crusades. See Robertson, Charles V. note 30.

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rope, we might reasonably have expected from the character, the duration, and the locality of the Holy Wars. However generally unconnected with the motives and designs, whether of the assailants or of the assailed, the communication or the admission of knowledge may hereafter be proved to have been, some traces of national refinement, whether in Asia or at Constantinople, could scarcely fail, during a protracted intercourse with the West, to have been displayed and imparted. To the knowledge of the Aristotelian philosophy in Europe, the Crusaders were involuntary contributors, by introducing one additional treatise [f] of the Stagirite. Again, in Architecture and Poetry, we shall easily reconcile with our preconceived notions the appearance of a still more decided effect. The religious nature of the enterprise will account for its influence upon the first; its imaginative and enthusiastic character for a peculiar adaptation to the second. Every part, indeed, of the Crusader's project was poetical; its plan, its accompaniments, its object. The poet and the romance writer exult in the sacrifice of self-interest to hazard and imagination; of the dull and monotonous realities of common life to the bright visions of the hero and the enthusiast. By intercourse, too, with the proper land of fiction, the ideal world of poetry was peopled with new beings, and embellished by new combinations of images. Nor is fact wanting to

[f] The Metaphysics. Mills, History of the Crusades.

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justify our argument. We know from history that Minstrels formed an important part of the Crusade retinue; and thus was accomplished a more than imaginary union between the exploits of the Warrior and the conceptions of the Poet. Hence, to the latest posterity, the recollection of the Crusades always summoned up a train of associations highly favourable to poetic incident. Yet, even in this point, (the only one in which the character of the Crusades was obviously connected with literature,) we have no reason to believe that they exercised immediately more than an auxiliary influence.

Closely interwoven with the history of the Crusades, and such, indeed, as in estimating their effects upon Arts and Literature, we must consider an integral part of the Holy Wars, was the temporary reign of the Latins at Constantinople. From the comparatively peaceful nature of this connexion; from the greater facilities which it afforded, by proximity of situation, to the intercourse of the East and West; from the more intimate (however incomplete) resemblance of languages and national habits, we might reasonably have expected that this partial union of Eastern with Western *Europeans* would have occasioned a greater and more extensive benefit to the unenlightened nations of the West, than the tumultuous sojourn in the Holy Land. But any such pleasing anticipations are disappointed by the event. The reign of the Latin emperors at Constantinople was unaccompanied in its immediate effects by any

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direct or permanent introduction[g] of Grecian language or literature into Western Europe. Accidentally, indeed, the occupation of the Eastern empire was productive of some advantage to the literature of the West. The persecuted scholar, whose home was now that of his enemies, occasionally sought refuge[h] among the people of Western Europe, and imparted, in return for their hospitality, a portion of his knowledge. But it was long before the seed, thus thinly scattered, took deep root in the barren and unyielding soil of the West.

The positive effects directly produced by the Crusades upon the Arts and Literature of Europe have thus been summarily stated. The limited extent of those effects, or, in other words, the absence of any original, universal, and decisive influence, next presents itself. And for this also sufficient cause may be found in the nature and object of the Crusades; in the characters of those who engaged in them; and in the intellectual condition of the country wherein they were conducted. The investigation of these topics will leave it more a matter of surprise that the Crusades had any immediate effect upon Arts and Literature, than that they had so little.

The state of excitement which an expedition, strictly military, produces throughout the whole community of persons interested in its success, (and,

[g] Gibbon, vol. xi. c. 61.

[h] Berington, Literary History of the Middle Ages.

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in the instance of the Crusades, that community was all Europe,) is little calculated to favour the cultivation of the intellectual powers. However these excited feelings may eventually be directed with advantage to the labours of useful, or the refinements of polished life, they are adverse, while military renown alone is the object in view, to all steady and systematic exertion in any other department. The arts belong proverbially to the leisure of peace; and literature, among nations as well as individuals, is then only promoted with complete success, when cultivated as a primary object of employment, rather than as a recreation from the toils of the city or the camp.

This remark is still more applicable to the case of those who were actually engaged in the expedition. To excel in arms, not in arts, was their object; and if they gazed for a while[i] with stupid amazement upon the classic treasures of Constantinople, it was only to calculate the vastness of their booty, and to collect fury for the attack. The Crusaders, moreover, visited the East under the strongest of prejudices—those of religious hatred; and hence to them, as to the Greek of old, difference of climate and opinion alone seemed to constitute barbarism. Lastly, the ignorance, general or universal, among the Crusaders, of all languages but

[i] Robertson, Charles V. Introductory chapter. Note.

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their own, would act as an additional barrier to that communication with their more polished enemies, from which their minds alone were sufficiently averse. These obstacles would operate in regard to the connexion both with Constantinople and with Syria, and the consideration of them leads us to presume, that any knowledge derived from the East by means of the Crusades must have been derived partially and accidentally.

But with reference to Arabian knowledge, another circumstance opposes itself to the presumption of any direct results from the Crusades. The Augustan age of Haroun and Almaimoun, it must be recollected, was no more; for Arabian literature, like a forced plant, had been transient in its bloom, because unnatural in its maturity. Some traces, indeed, of former cultivation might still be found within the walls of Bagdad, and thence the Crusaders derived a small and occasional advantage. But that fire of inventive genius, and spirit of literary research, which once characterized the Arabians, and which alone could have been expected permanently to benefit the minds of the Europeans, had already subsided.

Nor, perhaps, has Europe any just ground for lamenting that her subsequent progress in knowledge was rather the result of her own exertions, (however aided by external circumstances,) than of any im-

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mediate connexion with the East; and that the energies aroused by the Crusades were not wasted in the exclusive cultivation of Arabian literature. For it was, after all, by ingenuity and quickness of invention, (so peculiarly national, as to be scarcely, under any circumstances, communicable to minds of a colder temperament,) rather than by any substantial acquirements of knowledge, that the Arabians, at this period, were distinguished. The arts and sciences, in which they had made proficiency, were generally ineffective from their neutral character; at once too practical to be elegant, and too fanciful to be useful. The study of Medicine and the art of Calculation were marred by the follies of the talisman and the horoscope. Their philosophy too was of the same description. It was the system of Aristotle, engrafted upon brilliant speculations, and perverted by national ingenuity. Like the rest of Arabian knowledge, therefore, it combined much that was useful with more that was dangerous; and to inexperienced minds the dangerous part was that which more easily assimilated itself. Hence the leading defect of all the literature which, before and during the Crusades, Europe derived from the East. Imagination encroached upon every department, and tyrannized in its own. Philosophy was fanciful, and Fiction extravagant. Nor did the researches of Science share a better fate. Astronomy was lost in astrology, Chemistry in alchemy, and Medicine in empiricism. Yet such had been the darkness of a former period, that we hail the appearance even of these

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errors, as an indication of returning energy, and an earnest of future aspirations.

2. If, then, the Crusades did not immediately contribute to any important change in arts and literature, it remains to be shewn, in the second place, that they were beneficial to the intellectual powers, by awakening the feelings, and changing the views, of the Europeans.

To inspire Europe with an ardour of pursuit hitherto unknown; to render her the instrument of her own intellectual resuscitation, rather than the recipient of extraneous knowledge; to break through her habitual associations in matters of knowledge and taste, effecting an oblivion of all that was erroneous in the arts and literature already prevalent, and applying the better part of them to advantage; this was necessary in order to ensure that high preeminence of literary and civilized character, which the Europeans have now generally obtained; and to this the indirect influence of the Crusades will appear to have been conducive.

Previously, however, to an examination of the means by which the Crusades were instrumental to this end, it will be necessary to remove the apparent objection, founded upon the interval of two centuries between the Crusades and the revival of learning; an objection, which, although valid as regards the effects of the expedition upon the actual

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knowledge of the Europeans, is inapplicable to the supposition of a remote prospective influence upon Arts and Literature, produced by a change of moral feeling and political character.

That enthusiasm and that susceptibility of impression, which were at once the cause and the consequence of the expeditions to Palestine, and which, therefore, have rightly been termed the "spirit of "the Crusades," long survived the failure of the actual project. If the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were the age of the Crusades, the two following were not less the age of associations connected with the wars in Palestine. It was no false estimate of popular feeling which suggested, during the fourteenth, and the earlier part of the fifteenth century, the reiteration of the summons to Palestine; and the disappointments consequent upon experience alone, counteracted the influence of enthusiasm yet predominant. Nor will it appear surprising that this enthusiasm continued to prevail, when we recollect the various circumstances of adventitious interest by which it was fostered. To the impressions of a former period, currency and value had been given by the creation of the Crusade orders of knighthood; by the animating effusions of lyric poetry; by the accurate details of history; and the striking embellishments of fiction. And thus the Crusades continued in the minds of men as the watchword of Chivalry and the theme of Romance, till Tasso gave perpetuity by his immortal poem to the records of

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an event, which had not, even in his age, ceased to be of public interest. The fourteenth century, so far from being justly considered as a vacuum between the Crusades and the revival of literature, was in spirit an active, though in knowledge an unproductive, period; furnished with many links in the chain by which cause and effect are strongly, however remotely, connected. At least Imagination, that power which, among nations in a dark age, as in the mind of individuals when asleep, becomes the substitute for deeper intellectual faculties, continued to exercise a decided influence from the period of the Crusades to that of restored learning; and was as certainly an accompaniment and a consequence of the one, as it was a cause of the other.

§. 1. The Crusades appear to have been permanently advantageous to Europe by directing to one object of unanimous and lasting interest, the feelings and prejudices of men. Like rays of light, the energies of the human mind are comparatively powerless, unless concentrated. Dispersion in the one case, and distraction in the other, are fatal to effective application. The perpetual recurrence, therefore, of enthusiasm and imagination (which during the middle ages were exposed to the frequent influence of trivial objects) to one subject of universal interest, gave a vigour to individual minds, and an efficacy to collective exertion, which became the precedent and the principle of a more enlarged system of intellectual activity. So far, then, as the

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great Expedition of the Middle Ages was single in interest, it was beneficial to the intellectual powers of men; so far as that single object was of a military character, it was injurious to them. The effects of this concentration of interest remained, and were applied to better purposes, after the immediate cause of the interest had passed away. And thus the Crusades were, from this compound character, at once immediately prejudicial, and ultimately favourable to knowledge; prejudicial, that is, to the continued cultivation of such Arts and branches of Literature as prevailed in the dark ages; and favourable to the introduction of those which were to grace a brighter period.

We must be careful, however, to distinguish between identity of object and unanimity of plan. Some have attributed beneficial consequences to the actual union of nations, and, as it is called, collision of minds, in the Crusades. But of these results, the former was of short continuance, and the latter of questionable utility. The Crusades, although an ideal bond of union, were an actual cause of dissension. The collision of minds, too, is then only favourable to the developement of faculties in each individual, when those minds have previously been cultivated, and are bent upon distinct, yet kindred, intellectual pursuits.

§. 2. The effects of the Crusades upon politics and society have generally been admitted. They con-

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tributed, undesignedly indeed, but forcibly, to the stability of governments; to the organization of communities; to definition of rights, and enlargement of civil liberty. It is almost unnecessary to point out the influence of each political and social change here described upon the intellectual character. Where confusion and distraction prevailed before, we have now regularity and steadiness; where mental vigour was formerly harassed in asserting undefined rights, or in extricating itself from unnecessary restraints, it is now free to dwell upon the records of ancient lore, or to expatiate in the unexplored region of discovery. Vain indeed, or worse than vain, without this salutary preparation, would have been the influx of literature into Europe upon the fall of Constantinople! But it was wisely provided that the Crusades should not be the occasion of knowledge which would have been useless, because premature; but of changes which indirectly facilitated the admission and the application of that knowledge, when it was eventually, and by the agency of other causes, introduced.

It has been observed, that the immediate and the remote consequences of the Crusades were often widely different. This is peculiarly true of their effects upon the military habits of Europe. We have seen them for a time giving new ardour and activity to the warlike character; engrossing the popular mind with an exclusive passion for deeds of arms; sacrificing intellectual cultivation to corpo-

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real prowess; converting the land of the Cross into the field of Chivalry, and again promoting Chivalry in Europe by connecting it, in the person of the Crusade knight, with the inspiring recollections of Holy ground.

We now view the same Crusades in their remote effects, as the accidental means of exhausting the military spirit of Europe. To those who had fought in Palestine with all the animating associations of place and circumstance; defending the religion of their Redeemer upon the spot of his death; the petty distinctions of military tenure seemed a very inadequate [l] subject of contention. But there was a still more obvious reason for the decline of the feudal system. The expenses incurred in the holy wars occasioned, upon the return of the Crusaders, the sale [m] of many baronial estates. And thus were gradually abolished those feudal institutions, "which "had been so intrinsically adverse to all arts by "which the evils of man are mitigated, or his la- "bours abridged [n]." Hence too followed the distinction of professions, before so unjustly distributed,

[l] The heaviest anathemas were denounced against those who should disquiet or annoy such as had devoted themselves to the Crusade service. Private quarrels and hostilities were accordingly banished. *Robertson, Charles* V.

[m] Robertson, &c. Gibbon, vol. xi. Among the causes which undermined the Gothic edifice of feudalism, a conspicuous place must be allowed to the Crusades.

[n] Hallam, Middle Ages.

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or so preposterously confused [o]; and the consequent advantage to intellectual cultivation corresponding with that which manual operations derive from a division of labour.

§. 3. If, then, the Crusades had been thus instrumental only in removing a positive obstacle to the cultivation of knowledge, the beneficial tendency of their influence would have been sufficiently established. But they were more than negatively useful. In contributing to obliterate the traces of an exclusively military character, they gradually substituted habits which were as decidedly beneficial to arts and literature as those which they supplanted had been injurious.

The difference of natural productions in different climates, and the benefits of exchange, though not unknown to the Europeans before the Crusades, were rendered strikingly apparent during their long residence in the East. They acquired, moreover, a taste for distant excursions, and a knowledge of local peculiarities. Commerce too, especially maritime, was promoted by the necessity of supplies for the Crusaders, and the privileges secured by the Holy Wars to mercantile speculation [p]. When, therefore, the love of military renown declined throughout Europe, the spirit of adventure was gradually directed to

[o] As in the "Miles Clericus."

[p] Robertson, America, India, Charles V.

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the pursuit of wealth. The commercial character, which before had been subordinate to the military, was thus extended and confirmed by the Crusades, till at length it became the distinguishing feature of Europe.

The facilities and refinements of navigation, including, of course, the discovery of the compass, were among the earliest attendants of improving Commerce; and, as the means of still further acquisitions, may be regarded as the most important. Then follow all those arts of utility and convenience by which the productions of nature are applied or improved. The arts of weaving and dying, the manufacture of paper, and the application of printing have been attributed, each in its turn, to the Crusades, but were in fact only the indirect results of those expeditions through the medium of increasing Industry and Commerce. If, however, to the discoveries already enumerated we add the composition of gunpowder, each higher department of active life, the commercial, the literary, and the military, will appear furnished, soon after the Crusades, with its own peculiar instrumental art.

Again, the results of Commerce, wealth and luxury, were equally favourable to the cultivation of elegant knowledge. We need not refer to the comparative refinement of Athens and Lacedæmon in order to prove the benefits which intellectual cultivation derives from wealth. Modern Italy suggests

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a more appropriate example. That country was at once the most commercial in Europe, and the earliest to awaken the genius of Painting and Sculpture, of Poetry and elegant Literature. It was the first to display the beneficial effects of the Crusades, because it had the greatest predisposition to favour that peculiar character of which the Crusades were productive. Even before the eleventh century, had Commerce, despised in more chivalrous regions as the dull and unpoetical pursuit of ordinary minds, found a home on the shores of Italy, and introduced comparative refinement at Genoa, Venice, and Amalfi.

Since Italy was the country whence the knowledge of modern Europe, especially that of an elegant character, originated, it is important to ascertain that the commercial effects of the Crusades were there principally discernible. But the whole of Europe speedily experienced the same beneficial results. We hear soon after the Crusades, of more magnificence in the structure of palaces, and a more refined taste in their decorations. Luxury and the arts now fostered each other. By the decline, too, of the feudal system, the benefits of monarchical patronage were secured to the efforts of genius and the cultivation of taste.

The progress of literature was widely different from that in the arts. Here the imagination was exercised, before the understanding was matured. Modern Poetry, which began with Dante, was long

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antecedent to modern Philosophy; so long, indeed, that it may seem almost fanciful to refer the great improvement of the reasoning powers in the sixteenth century to the influence of the Crusades in the thirteenth. But the springs even of this intellectual action, however tardy or complicated in their operation, may be traced to that expedition which first called forth the energies of Europe, and promoted a spirit of unprejudiced inquiry.

To sum up the argument. The Crusades have seemed destitute neither of direct, nor of indirect, influence upon the Arts and Literature of Europe. Their immediate influence, however, has appeared upon investigation to have been in character subordinate, and in extent limited; but their remote and indirect results, to have been primarily and permanently beneficial to Europe. Upon the whole it may be concluded, that, while the Crusades were, according to human calculation, ill adapted to produce any intellectual results, they were rendered accidentally, or, as we may rather say, providentially, an unforeseen, but to future ages easily discernible cause of acceleration to the age of restored learning and original invention.

It remains to consider the arguments adduced to prove that the Crusades, so far from having exercised a favourable influence upon the intellectual state of Europe, were instrumental in retarding the progress of learning and refinement. Of these objections to

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the view at present taken of the question, some have been already considered, and most will be met by the general plan which has been adopted, of regarding the Crusades as the remote and not the immediate cause of a beneficial influence. But two questions of some interest remain to be examined.

The destruction of so many valuable monuments of ancient learning and taste at Constantinople, although not strictly a consequence of the Crusades, it may fairly be said would not have taken place but for those expeditions. Writers have, therefore, deviated from the subject of the Crusades, to comment with unmeasured abhorrence upon the savage fury of those barbarians who viewed with complacency the demolition they had caused. But it has been well remarked, that the knowledge of modern Europe, had it been less her own, would have been less permanent and effectual. Enough of classic art and literature still remained to facilitate and direct the exertions of Europe without depriving them of the merit and the advantages of originality. The chaos of the dark ages was the best foundation of the newly-created intellectual universe; but the materials of a former world might aptly be introduced to complete and beautify the fabric which they could not have supported. The Crusaders, then, might unconsciously have done service to future arts and literature, by destroying those superabundant models, which would have cramped the genius, before they could have refined the taste, of European imitators.

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The tendency of the Crusades to increase the power of the Church is a still more specious objection. It cannot be denied that the treasury of the Church was enriched, and its influence extended, by the Holy Wars; and it is equally unquestionable that this newly-acquired wealth and influence were employed forthwith to check the progress of inquiry, and to extend the empire of superstition. The Cross, which had hitherto been raised as the ensign of intolerance against infidelity alone, was now assumed to extirpate heresy; and whatever of Scriptural doctrine or Apostolic discipline had under that name been preserved free from contagion in the Valdensian or Albigensian churches, was opposed with a violence which the yet prevailing spirit of the Crusades alone could have projected or carried into execution.

But here, as elsewhere, we must recur to the distinction so often made between the immediate and the remote consequences of the Crusades. The ecclesiastical power eventually sank under its own weight; and the Crusades were among those causes which contributed to weaken the foundations of the structure, by adding to its encumbrances. With the present advantages of wealth and influence, the Crusades procured to the Church the occasion of ultimate decay. Moreover they rendered palpable and intolerable those particular errors, by the exposure of which the Reformation was effected. The sale of Indulgences was brought to its height by the Crusades; and *this* was the very corruption which pro-

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voked the indignation of Luther. Thus then to the Crusades we may not unfairly ascribe the acceleration of that great event, which was at once the most important consequence of restored learning, and the surest guarantee for its continuance.

Whatever cause, therefore, we may find, in the origin and progress of the Crusades, to reprobate the operation of unwarrantable motives, or to deplore the effects of misguided zeal, we can scarcely fail to acknowledge, in the final disposition of events, the subservience of human weakness to the ends of Divine Wisdom and Goodness. Amid scenes of plunder and bloodshed, in the country of infidels or enemies, were sown, unconsciously, the seeds of intellectual greatness, which were ultimately to ripen into an abundant harvest. The fruit, now matured, may return to its parent earth with additional promise.—In the progress of ages, Europe has obtained that ascendency in knowledge and refinement, whereby she may be enabled to dispel from the face of other nations the darkness in which she was herself formerly enveloped. To that Eastern hemisphere, especially, whence she first derived the light of learning and civilization, and whence, at a later period, she drew the materials of a character which prepared her for still greater accessions of knowledge;—thither, from the fulness of her own intellectual meridian, she may now return, and kindle a brighter light than she received!

The champions of her Religion may now too, as of

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old, unfurl the banner of the Cross; which, however, to those, who from distant lands descry its approach, shall no longer seem the standard of war and desolation, but the harbinger of Glad Tidings, and the symbol of universal Peace.

FREDERICK OAKELEY,

Fellow of Balliol College.

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